

# AVOIDING ANIMAL BITES

## QUICK TIPS

It is estimated that dogs bite 4.7 million people each year in the United States. Children are the most common victims. Dog bites are a serious problem in our community. These simple tips can help you avoid being part of these statistics.

**1. Spay or neuter your dog.** Dogs who have not been spayed or neutered are three times more likely to bite than ones who have been surgically altered.

**2. Training.** Socializing your dog so that it is comfortable around friends, neighbors and children goes a long way toward preventing bites.

**3. Never play “attack” games with your pet.** Dogs won’t know the difference between play and real-life situations.

**4. Be cautious in new situations.** Keep a watchful eye on your dog and have it securely restrained when meeting new people or when strangers such as service technicians and other visitors are at your home.

**5. Do not disturb a dog that is eating, sleeping, or caring for puppies.**

**6. Never approach a strange dog.** Do not pet a dog; even your own, without knowing it is aware you are there. It’s a good idea to let it sniff you first too.

**7. When approached by a dog you don’t know, don’t run or scream.** Instead stand still with your hands at your side and avoid direct eye contact with the dog. Teach children to “Be a statue” until the dog goes away.

**8. If you are knocked down or attacked by a dog, curl up into a ball and lie as still as possible.** Try to protect your head, neck and ears with your arms and hands.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON  
ANIMAL BITE PREVENTION,  
CONTACT ANIMAL CONTROL AT  
268-8473**

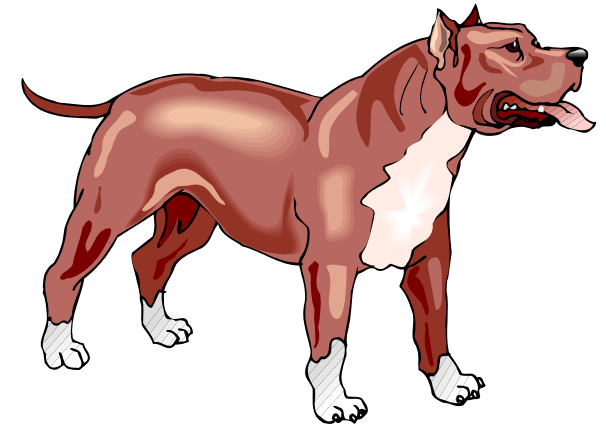


Animal Control  
1900 E. 9<sup>th</sup> N.  
Wichita, Ks. 67214  
268-8473  
[www.wichita.gov](http://www.wichita.gov)

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# PREVENTING AND AVOIDING ANIMAL BITES

How to “bite proof” your dog and avoid being bitten



City of Wichita-Animal Control  
268-8473

**Q: How many dog bites occur every year in the United State?**

A: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia, estimates that dogs bite nearly 2% of the U.S. population each year. This is more than 4.7 million people per year, most of whom are children.

**Q: How many people die every year as a result of dog bites?**

A: Ten to twenty people die every year as a result of dog bites in the U.S. By far, the majority of the victims are children. From January 1997 through December 1998, 27 people died after being bitten by a dog. Nineteen of these victims were children under twelve years of age. Of the eight adult victims, most were elderly.

**Q: Why do some dogs bite?**

A: There are many reasons why a dog may bite. Dogs may bite due to fear, to protect their territory, or to establish their dominance over the person being bitten. Some dog owners mistakenly teach their dogs that biting is an acceptable form of play behavior. Because dog bites occur for many reasons, many components of responsible dog ownership-Including proper socialization, supervision, humane training, sterilization, and safe confinement-are necessary to prevent dogs from biting.

**Q: Which dogs most commonly bite? Are some breeds more likely to bite than others?**

A: The list of top breeds involved in both bite injuries and fatalities changes from year

to year and from one area of the country to another, depending on the popularity of the breed. Although genetics do play some part in determining whether a dog will bite, factors such as whether the dog is spayed or neutered, properly socialized, supervised, humanely trained, and safely confined play significantly greater roles. Responsible dog ownership of all breeds is the key to dog bite prevention.

**Q: What should I do if my dog bites someone?**

A: If your dog bites someone, act responsibly by taking these steps:

- Confine your dog immediately and check on the victim's condition. If necessary, seek medical help. Contact Animal Control, 268-8473.
- Provide the victim with important information, such as the date of your dog's last rabies vaccination.
- Cooperate with Animal Control officials. Strictly follow quarantine requirements for your dog.
- Seek professional help to prevent your dog from biting again. Consult with your veterinarian, who may refer you to an animal behaviorist or a dog trainer. If your dog's dangerous behavior cannot be controlled, do not give it to someone else.

**Q: What should I do if I think a dog may attack?**

A: If you are approached by a dog that may attack you, follow these steps:

- Never scream and run. Remain motionless, hands at your sides, and avoid eye contact with the dog. Once the dog loses interest in you, slowly back away until it is out of sight.
- If the dog does attack, "feed" it your jacket, purse, bicycle, or anything that you can put between yourself and the dog.
- If you fall or are knocked to the ground, curl into a ball with your hands over your ears and remain motionless. Try not to scream or roll around.

**Q: What should I do if a dog bites me?**

A: If you are bitten or attacked by a dog, try not to panic.

- Immediately wash the wound thoroughly with soap and warm water.
- Contact your physician for additional care and advice.
- Report the bite to Animal Control, 268-8473. Tell the Animal Control official everything you know about the dog, including its owner's name and the address where it lives. If the dog is a stray, tell the Animal Control official what the dog looked like, where you saw it, whether you've seen it before, and in which direction it went.